United Nations ST/IC/1999/50

Secretariat

6 July 1999

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff at Headquarters

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services

Subject: **Migration to Microsoft Office 97 Professional Suite**

1. The purpose of this information circular is to confirm to staff members that the Information Technology Services Division is introducing the Microsoft Office 97 Professional Suite (MS Office 97) as the new standard desktop productivity software at Headquarters. This migration, which was agreed upon by the Information Technology Coordination Committee in 1997, has been discussed on a regular basis during the meetings of the departmental focal points.

2. The MS Office 97 software suite consists of the following four desktop applications:

Microsoft Word 97	Word-processing program
Microsoft Excel 97	Spreadsheet program
Microsoft Access 97	Database program
Microsoft PowerPoint 97	Presentation program

3. In parallel, Paradox 8.0, though it is not part of the MS Office 97 suite, will be made available and may be used as an alternative database software.

4. The migration to MS Office 97 will raise the Headquarters standard desktop applications to industry standards, provide users better integration with other desktop applications and ensure year 2000 compliance on software throughout Headquarters.

5. The migration to MS Office 97 will replace the current United Nations standard applications, which are based on obsolete 16-bit processing architecture and are no longer in line with current industry standards. The applications to be replaced include WordPerfect 5.1 and 6.1, Quattro Pro 6.01 and Paradox 4.5 and 5.0.

6. All four MS Office 97 applications (Word 97, Excel 97, Access 97 and PowerPoint 97) and Paradox 8.0 have already been distributed to the installed base of approximately 5,000 users through Central Management Software, which centrally distributes new software and updates.

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* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2000.

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7. In recent months, the Information Technology Services Division has been meeting with the departmental managers and focal points to discuss individual conversion requirements. The Division has been working in coordination with Training Services in the Office of Human Resources Management to schedule training for all MS Office 97 applications based on user needs. Training courses on the various components of the MS Office 97 suite have been available to staff since May 1998 and have thus far been attended by more than 3,000 staff members. The Division has also hired a team of technical consultants on a temporary basis to advise user offices in the conversion of existing documents and applications. These and other measures are being taken to ensure a smooth and successful transition to MS Office 97 and to ensure a minimal disruption in productivity.

8. Although the old software products (WordPerfect, Quattro Pro, and Paradox 4.5 and 5.0) will be available through the Central Management Software until the end of the year, help-desk support for them will be discontinued as of 31 July 1999. We encourage all users who have not already done so to begin using the new software and to register for training if necessary.

9. The MS Office 97 software suite provides all staff with the capability of developing applications using one or more of its components. Any new personal computer-based applications requiring word-processing, spreadsheets, databases or presentation software should be developed using the MS Office 97 software suite exclusively. Current applications based on any other software should be changed to the MS Office 97 suite before the end of 1999.

10. A new version of the Microsoft Office suite, Office 2000, was recently made commercially available. The Information Technology Services Division will test the software extensively prior to certifying it for distribution on the network. In the meantime, users should not install this software on any personal computer connected to the Headquarters network.